Challenges for NGOs

ATTACKING POVERTY • BUILDING SOLIDARITY • CREATING JOBS

Number 2

May 1994

The World Summit for Social Development

Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark

6-12 March 1995

UNITED NATIONS

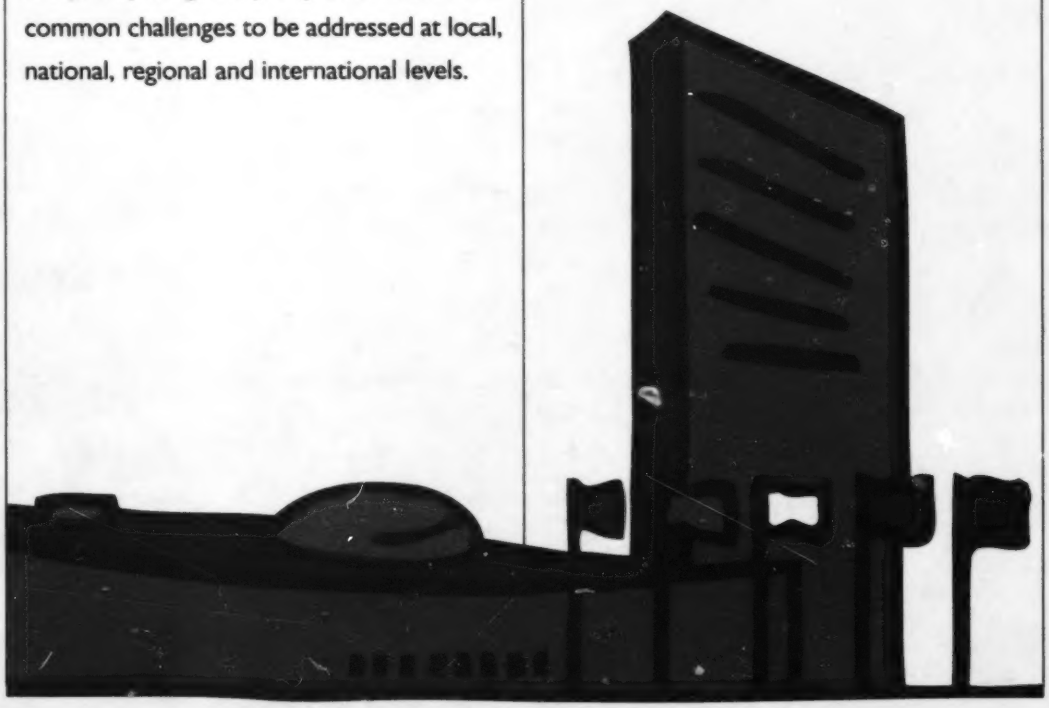
Note: *Challenges for NGOs* wil be issued at irregular intervals, corresponding generally to the Social Summit PrepComs, in order to keep NGOs posted on matters of interest.

PREPCOM I FROM THE NGO PERSPECTIVE

The first substantive Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the World Summit for Social Development met from 31 January to 11 February 1994 in New York. A total of 246 NGOs were accredited to participate in this initial PrepCom, which concluded its two-week session with the adoption of an outline for a Declaration and Programme of Action. Draft texts for both documents will be published by June 1994.

The Summit draft Declaration will express common values and objectives for social development policies and will affirm the principles, goals, policy orientations and common challenges to be addressed at local, national, regional and international levels.

The Summit draft Programme of Action will focus on strategies to ensure an enabling environment for social development, reduce and eliminate widespread poverty, create productive employment and reduce unemployment, emphasize social integration and establish means for follow-up utilizing the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other intergovernmental organizations. The draft texts of both documents will be reviewed by PrepCom II (22 August–2 September) in New York.



WHY A SOCIAL SUMMIT?

"Social development cannot be pursued in an economy that is stagnant or prone to high inflation and instability", according to the Report of the Secretary-General for the first Preparatory Committee meeting (31 January–11 February 1994) in New York.

Over the past five decades, while there has been progress, the Charter's stated goal to "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" for all have not been realized. As a result:

• Poverty remains widespread, even increasing in absolute terms; one out of every five people in the world (over one billion people) lives below the poverty line.

• Unemployment, even in industrialized countries, is reaching levels unprecedented in recent history. Twenty per cent of the world's total population earns less than two per cent of its income. Unemployment and underemployment account for a rising number of "economic migrants".

• Social disintegration, which happens when "the marginalized" become the mainstream, is increasing in many regions of the so-called "developed" world. Only one in ten people participates fully in the political, economic, social and cultural institutions that shape their lives. The excluded include the poor, women, minorities and rural dwellers.

SUMMIT "CORE ISSUES"

• Reduction and elimination of widespread poverty: The Summit hopes to achieve consensus at the highest levels on economic policies which will enhance both economic and social efficiency in an environmentally sustainable manner.

• Productive employment and the reduction of unemployment: As primary causes of poverty, social unrest and migration, unemployment and low-productivity employment must be replaced by more productive work opportunities.

• Social integration: Policy-makers at all levels must address the issues of sharpening social inequalities, fragmentation of societies and polarization of population or income groups to better balance individual aspirations with the common good.

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

Heads of State or Government will participate in the two-day Summit (11-12 March 1995), while their representatives, high-level officials and experts will attend pre-Summit consultations (6-10 March 1995). Participants and observers will also include representatives of UN system organizations, intergovernmental organizations, national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), experts, professional associations and accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) expressing the wish to attend the World Summit for Social Development and/or the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings will be accredited for participation.

Non-ECOSOC NGOs may apply to the appropriate NGO Unit responsible for evaluation of accreditation requests (see provisions under "NGO Participation in the Summit" on page 7 of this brochure).

SETTING THE STAGE: THE UN PREPARATORY PROCESS

The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) of the World Summit for Social Development comprises all United Nations Member States, as well as members of UN specialized agencies. A Bureau is chaired by Ambassador Juan O. Somavia (Chile), with representatives from Australia, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland and Zimbabwe, as well as Denmark (as Summit host country), serving as Vice-Chairpersons. UN preparations for the Summit are being coordinated by a small secretariat headed by Jacques Baudot, under the responsibility of Nitin Desai, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

The Summit will be the culmination of three substantive preparatory meetings, in addition to input from the General Assembly, all of which share the following five objectives:

• Raising awareness (enhancing conventional methods);

• Exchanging information and experience (social indicators);

• Establishing policy dialogue in areas of international concern (NGO potential as catalysts and re-disseminators);

• Developing norms, standards, conventions and other international instruments (quantified targets);

• Identifying areas of cooperation and direct support for developing countries.

PrepCom I: **31 January–11 February 1994**
New York
See page 1 for details.

PrepCom II: **22 August–2 September 1994**
New York
A draft Declaration and draft Programme of Action will be under discussion.

General Assembly:
September–December 1994
New York
The forty-ninth session of the General Assembly will consider reports from the First and Second PrepCom meetings.

PrepCom III: **16–27 January 1995**
New York
Third Session of the Preparatory Committee

World Summit for Social Development:
6-12 March 1995
Copenhagen

NGOS: TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE

The involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in UN conferences has increased in recent years, particularly after the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ("Earth Summit"). The contribution by NGOs to the World Summit for Social Development is considered important by the Preparatory Committee, which stresses that NGO participation is also essential at the national, regional and international levels.

NGOS AND THE SOCIAL SUMMIT

To date 246 NGOs have been expressly accredited to participate in this Summit. About 150 actually attended the first PrepCom. A list of currently accredited NGOs may be obtained either from the NGO Liaison Officer for the World Social Summit (see page 7) or electronically through the APC electronic communications network (see next page).

NON-GOVERNMENTAL LIAISON SERVICE (NGLS)

The Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) is a United Nations inter-agency unit with offices in both New York and Geneva. It focuses on the sustainable and social development agendas of the UN, highlighting such current programme priorities as human development, environment and development, the global economy and African recovery and development. Its role in the Social Summit includes:

• Reporting to the Summit secretariat on relevant NGO, Member State and UN Secretariat preparatory activities;

• Facilitating NGO activities around the PrepCom meetings and at the Summit itself; and

• Facilitating information exchange between NGOs and the UN system.

For additional information, please contact:

UN-NGLS
866 UN Plaza, Room 6015
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. (212) 963-3125
Fax (212) 963-8712
E-mail: ngls@igc.apc.org

UN-NGLS
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Tel. (4122) 907-2076
Fax (4122) 907-0057

NGO ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO UN DOCUMENTATION

NGLS distributes relevant official UN documents in English, French and Spanish to NGOs via the APC electronic communications network under the access code <un.socdev.docs> conference.

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) is a coalition of independent, non-governmental and mostly non-profit computer network systems which cooperate to provide networking and information-sharing tools worldwide. More than 30,000 NGOs, research institutes and UN agencies and several Governments are users of APC nodes.

NGO PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT

In addition to items listed in the first issue of this publication, here is a current list of NGO Summit preparatory meetings, along with the contacts for further details:

• 31 May–4 June 1994

Tunis, Tunisia

Regional meeting for African NGOs preparing for the World Summit convened by enda inter-arabe, Environment and Development in the Arab World. For further details, contact:

enda inter-arabe
Cité Vénus Bloc 2
El Menzah VII, 1004 Tunis, Tunisia
Tel./Fax (2161) 766 234

• 8–10 July 1994

Helsinki, Finland

The International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) are holding regional consultations, as well as a global NGO Preparatory Meeting, for the Social Summit in conjunction with ICSW's International Conference on Social Welfare.

For further details, contact:

ICVA
13, rue Gautier
CH-1201 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel. (4122) 732-6600
Fax (4122) 738-9904

ICSW
380 St. Antoine Street West
Suite 3200
Montreal, Quebec H2Y 3X7
Canada
Tel. (514) 287-3280
Fax (514) 987-1567

• 12–14 September 1994

New York, NY, USA

The Annual NGO/DPI Conference, entitled "We, the Peoples . . . Building Peace", will focus on the role of NGOs in peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Military and human security are another aspect of last year's NGO/DPI Conference on the theme of "Social Development: A New Definition for Security". For further details, contact:

NGO Resource Centre, United Nations Department of Public Information, 801 UN Plaza, Room U-102, New York, NY, 10017, USA. Tel. (212) 963-6842 Fax (212) 963-6914

NGO PARTICIPATION IN THE SUMMIT

For information on NGO participation in the Summit, please contact:

NGO Liaison Officer
Secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development
Room DC2-1372
United Nations
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. (212) 963-1957
Fax (212) 963-3062

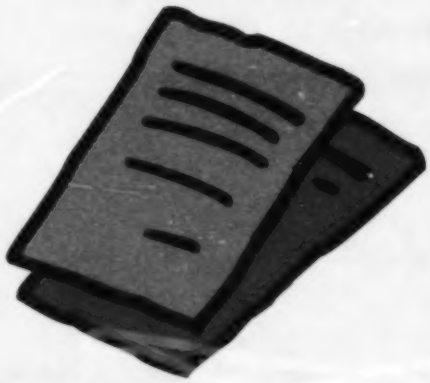
NGO Accreditation: NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will be accredited automatically upon written request to:

NGO Unit/DPCSD
Room DC2-2340
United Nations
New York, NY 10017, USA
Fax (212) 963-3892

NGOs not in consultative status with ECOSOC that desire accreditation to the World Summit for Social Development should complete an application form obtained from the above NGO Unit, providing the following information:

• Purpose of the organization;

• Information on its programmes and activities of relevance to the Summit, including substantive content and geographic location;



• Description of membership, indicating the total number of members and their geographic distribution; also a list of members of the governing body and their countries of nationality.

The application must be accompanied by a copy of the organization's most recent annual report which reflects its activities at the national and/or international level.

NGOs seeking accreditation must also confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the Summit. The background of each organization and its involvement in social development issues, particularly the core issues of poverty, unemployment and social integration, will serve as primary criteria in granting accreditation.

Deadlines for application:
PrepCom II: 13 June 1994
PrepCom III: 30 November 1994

Any NGO which has been accredited to attend one session of the PrepCom may attend all future sessions, as well as the Summit.

NGO-FORUM '95: MARCH 1995 COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Concurrent with the World Summit for Social Development, NGOs will hold a parallel NGO-Forum event in Copenhagen, details of which may be obtained from the address below.
The NGO-Forum '95 secretariat has several areas of responsibility:

• Publication of its own NGO newsletter to keep NGOs abreast of the latest developments;

• Facilitation of on-site participation of NGOs in the NGO Summit;

• Organization of parallel NGO events during the Summit week, such as conferences, workshops, exhibits and performances.

NGOs wishing to participate in NGO-Forum '95 activities should address their requests as soon as possible to:

NGO-FORUM '95
Social Summit Copenhagen
Njalsgade 13C
2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark
Tel. (45) 32 96 19 95
Fax (45) 32 96 89 19

NGO ACCOMMODATIONS IN COPENHAGEN

DIS Congress Service Copenhagen has been contracted to assist NGOs with reservations for hotel accommodations in Copenhagen during the World Summit for Social Development. For further details, please contact:

DIS Congress Service
Herlev Ringvej 2 C
2730 Herlev
Tel. (45) 44 92 44 92
Fax (45) 44 92 50 50

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